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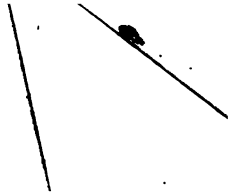

LYRIC POEMS,

WITH

SOME ADDITIONAL POEMS.

To Lord Minto
from his most
affectionate &
faithful servant
The Editor.

LYRIC

POEMS.

BY

JAMES MERCER, Esq.

SECOND EDITION,

WITH

SOME ADDITIONAL POEMS.

London.

PRINTED FOR ROBERT FAULDER,

New Bond Street.

1804.

J. BRETTELL, Printer, Great Windmill Street, Haymarket.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THIS EDITION.

THE Author of these Poems is a gentleman who passed the early part of his life in the Army, and who has since lived chiefly in retirement.

Emma, who is mentioned in several of the Poems, and to whom they are inscribed, was the Author's wife, and sister to the Editor *. She was a person of distinguished beauty in her Youth, as was easily perceivable to the latest period of her life, notwithstanding a long series

* Lord Glenbervie.

of uninterrupted illness, which she bore with exemplary patience, and truly Christian resignation. Her husband had the misfortune to lose her about a year and a half ago.

Note.

The Seven Poems immediately preceding the last (viz. "To Folly") are those which have been added in this Edition.

ERRATA.

Page 99, l. 3 fr. bot.—for *blue* read *blew*.
110, l. 1—for *Briton's* read *Britons'*.

TO

EMMA.

MY DEAREST SISTER,

I HAVE taken upon myself to hazard the publication of the following Poems.

Notwithstanding the long and uninterrupted intimacy which has subsisted between us, my friend never hinted to me the thought of printing them; nor did I ever suggest it, either to you or to him, till about a month ago.

I do not believe two persons exist more attached to another, than you and I are to him;

and our wishes for the successful reception of these Poems by the world are proportioned to our affection for their Author.

You know the opinion I entertain of their merit. Yet conscious that my partiality for him is extreme, after the possession of some of them for more than twice the time of deliberation prescribed by HORACE, I now deliver them over to the severe tribunal of general criticism, in doubtful hope and trembling solicitude.

I ever am,

My dearest Sister,

Your's most affectionately,

London, Dec. 20, 1794.

THE EDITOR.

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LYRIC POEMS.

TO

NOVELTY.

For thee, in infancy, we sigh,
And hourly cast an anxious eye
  Beyond the prison-house of home;
Till, from domestic tyrants free,
O'er the wide world, in search of thee,
  Fair Novelty! we roam.

Full on thy track, by dawn of day,
The stripling starts, and scours away,
  While Hope her active wing supplies,
And softly whispers in the gale,
At ev'ry turning of the vale,
  "Enjoyment onward lies."

Nor far remote—athwart the trees,
The landscape opens by degrees,
And yields sweet glimpses of delight—
Beyond the trees the views expand,
And all the scenes of fairy land
Come swelling on the sight.

'Tis here, where wild profusion flows,
On ev'ry shrub there hangs a rose,
And mellow fruit on ev'ry spray—
Here Pleasure holds her bounteous reign,
And here the wand'rer might remain,
Could Pleasure bribe his stay.

But still the love of Thee prevails—
He quits the port, and spreads his sails,
Careless if Ocean frown or smile;
So Fate shall give him to explore
The vast expanse, th' untrodden shore,
And undiscover'd isle.

Tir'd with the stillness of the deep,
While yet he chides the winds that sleep,
The clouds collect, the lightnings play;
And the torn vessel drives at last,
A wreck, abandon'd to the blast,
And found'ring on her way.

Again the vext horizon clears—
The hills emerge—the coast appears—
He and his mates their mirth renew;
They man their boats, their oars they hand,
And soon the hospitable strand
Receives the jolly crew.

What in th' interior parts befell,
In aftertimes we hear them tell,
When they at last their limbs recline;
The tongue, well pleas'd, its office plies,
And, all the while, their brimful-eyes
With dews of transport shine.

The happy natives they extol,
Their song, their dance, and festive bowl;
The fruitful soil, and balmy air—
" And O!—the daughters of the land!—
" Nature now works with niggard hand,
" And forms no maids so fair."

While thus, with pleasing warmth, they boast
Their gay excursions on the coast,
Where all seem'd brilliant, all divine;
The fond adventurers little know
It was thy pencil gave the glow,
The vivid charm was thine.

For when thy short-liv'd reign is o'er
The fairest forms enchant no more—
In listless apathy we gaze;
And Nature's face is wrapt in gloom,
Should all her vernal flow'rets bloom,
And all her jewels blaze.

Ah me! beyond thy short-liv'd reign,
And does there nought of love remain?—
  Can nought the sluggish heart engage?
Shall ev'ry joy with thee decay,
And Heav'n afford no parting ray
  To gild the hours of age?

Heav'n still is kind—When thou art fled,
Comes gentle Habit, in thy stead,
  With silent pace—nor comes in vain—
For, growing with declining years,
The good man's comforts she endears,
  And softens ev'ry pain.

Where she, sweet sober maid, abides,
Contentment at the board presides;
  No vagrant wish her votary stings—
In his own grounds he loves to tread;
Nor envies, on his household bed,
  The couch of eastern kings.

No meteors play—no mists arise—
Wean'd from thy love, we learn to prize
Firm faith and long experienc'd truth;
And now thy freaks and follies end,
In EMMA I regain the friend
And charmer of my youth.

Obsequious now to Love's command,
I seize my EMMA's yielding hand—
In her I grasp my joy, my pride;
And still deplore the tasteless hour,
When thy unhallow'd charms had pow'r
To tempt me from her side.

LA

MALADIE DU PAYS.

"SINCE Fortune thus has swell'd my store
" With cloudless gems and genuine ore;
" And all within my grasp I see
" That renders mortals blest and free;
" Why should I drag a willing chain?
" In life's decline, why still remain
" The wretched sport of hopes and fears?
" Why linger on this burning strand
" A stranger to my native land
" For more than twenty tedious years?"

Near Ganges' flood, bereav'd of health,
Sated with luxury and wealth,
One who had shar'd in India's spoil
Thus inly mourn'd his fruitless toil;
Till, as his restless fancy flew,
Homewards a longing look he threw—
The prospect charm'd his ills away;
He felt—on his awaken'd soul
A thousand soft ideas stole,
And Nature re-assum'd her sway.

From Asiatic pomp and pride
In that fond hour he turn'd aside,
To recollect his father's cot—
O! could he gain that peaceful spot—
Could he but catch the healthful breeze,
Reclin'd secure amid the trees
That near his native village grew—
Or tread once more the playful green,

He thought the beauties of the scene
Would all his early joy renew.

In that fond hour, from Rapine's crew,
With just remorse, he backwards drew—
The partners of his infant play,
His friends in life's advancing day,
The lovely maids he left behind,
Rose freshly pictured in his mind—
O! could he join the happy train,
With them perhaps he yet might share
The only blessing worth his care,
To love, and be belov'd again!

But when, at last, with hoarded store,
Safe landed on the British shore,
He posted to the lov'd retreat,
And sought for childhood's blithesome seat,
His father's cot in ruin lay;

The plough had swept the green away;
Rude hands had laid the timber low;
That luckless morn the welkin lower'd,
And the blast down the valley scour'd
From hills, in summer, clad with snow.

At once the buds of promise die,
The prospect alters in his eye—
The faded fair with scorn he sees;
His drooping friends no more can please;
The rising race, too hardy grown,
Nor court his smile, nor fear his frown;
And straight he cries: "Why tarry here,
"Where misery deforms the plain;
"Where pride and rustic manners reign,
"And savage winter rules the year?"

To thy complaints, however weak,
Vain man! let Truth her dictates speak:—

" Though now thy dream of bliss be fled,
" A dream by sickly fancy bred;
" Cease to revile our homely swains,
" Some latent worth this land contains;
" Respect the simple and sincere,
" And at the climate chide no more;—
" Can he who prowl'd on Asia's shore
" Live innocent and happy here?"

THE

CASTLE IN THE AIR.

To .....

WHEN Pyrrhus, in his youthful hour,
First grasp'd at universal pow'r,
He thus bespoke his warlike train:
" Prepare, my friends! to cross the main,
" Prepare ye, now, for hardy blows;
" Assur'd, when I have quell'd my foes,
" That all shall swim in full delight—
" Our future hours shall all be gay,
" Convivial mirth shall crown the day,
" And love endear the night."

His friend, who at his folly sigh'd,
CINEAS, a sober sage, replied:
" Indulgent prince! if that be all,
" Your floating armaments recall—
" For sure 'tis vain to search afar,
" And face the cruel storms of war,
" For fruits that bless your native soil—
" Women and wine are still at hand,
" Their ready joys you now command—
" Why purchase them with toil?"

'Twas wisely said—and you and I
Th' important lesson should apply—
For, in the busy walks of life,
While we encounter noise and strife,
And ev'ry effort madly strain
For Honour's prize, or paltry gain,
Th' unsettled mind no comfort knows;
And still we languish for the hour

When we may laugh at Fortune's pow'r,
And live in sweet repose.

If that be all, why further roam?
This vale affords a peaceful home—
Across our path no crowds appear;
No barb'rous clamour rages here;
The bleating flocks, the murm'ring rill,
The shepherd piping on the hill,
The birds in full assembled quire,
And all the vocal woods around,
Where echo sports with ev'ry sound,
Arcadian dreams inspire.

O! for a well-selected band,
To people this delightful land!—
Ye faithful friends! whom we approve,
And ye! the damsels whom we love—
All ye who tender hearts retain,

The favour'd and the slighted swain!
Romantic maids, and wishing brides;
From ev'ry region gather round;
For here the secret spot is found
Where Happiness resides.

Methinks! already at my call,
In fair array, I see them all,
Eager to gain her blest abode,
Come hast'ning down the hilly road;
They reach the plain—they cross the brook—
They settle in each shady nook—
Hark! how they carol through the grove!
While, busy at their pleasing care,
Like little birds, they fondly pair,
And build, and live for love.

The hamlets rise, and I foretell
Our colony will prosper well;

It needs no legislator's art,
Our laws are written on the heart.
In conscious innocence secure,
And from the world's contagion pure,
Our gentle duties we fulfil;
And reap the bliss our vale bestows,
Without a single thought on those
Who live beyond the hill.

But you, my friend, deride my strain,
And I myself confess 'tis vain—
'Tis vain to search for tranquil bow'rs,
For devious paths bestrew'd with flow'rs,
For summer seas, where we may sail,
Still favour'd by a friendly gale—
Life rolls in a tempestuous stream,
And we by sad experience find
That labour is the lot assign'd,
And rest an idle dream.

TO

THE TRIFLER.

AWAY with this unmeaning strain!
No more of luckless stars complain;
No more thy blasted hopes deplore,
Thy humble lot, and scanty store—
Resume, my friend! thy thoughtless glee,
Renounce thy wild ill-founded claim;
The paths that lead to wealth and fame,
Alas! were never trod by thee.

Ambition's heights, how couldst thou gain,
Exempt from labour, care, and pain?
Or idly hope, in Morpheus' bow'rs,
For ripening rays and golden show'rs?
Give plodding Industry her due;
Let those, whose hands improve the soil,
Reap the full produce of their toil,
And thou thy pleasing dreams pursue.

Still fond and fickle in thy dreams,
Still panting after wild extremes,
Now at the trumpet's martial sound,
Thy youthful heart was wont to bound;
Glory's wide field thy fancy fir'd:
And now the peasant's peaceful lot,
His simple fare, his humble cot,
Were all thy pensive soul requir'd.—

Ere long the pensive spirit flies;
Behold thee, provident and wise,
On gainful voyage intent to sail,
While storms and adverse winds prevail.—
But, should the winds propitious prove,
Let others stem the wat'ry way—
For thou hast sworn, at setting day,
To meet thy CLOE in the grove.—

From CLOE's thraldom scap'd at last,
And eager to redeem the past;
Resolv'd that here thy freaks shall end,
Thou com'st to me, thy sober friend,
Willing to know what I advise—
And I advise the best I can—
" Adopt, at length, a serious plan,
" And, persevering, hope to rise."

But soon my words are lost in air,
And recent tidings banish care;
For, now the social board is set,
The sons of pleasure all are met;
And at the news I hear thee say:
" A truce to thy sententious song!
" Thy grievous lessons are too long,
" And life too quickly flies away."

THE
ELOPEMENT.

ONE morning young COLIN, the poorest of those
Who fight, and are shot at, for sixpence a day,
Plann'd a prudent retreat, ere his landlord arose,
And, without beat of drum, sallied forth on his way.

Thro' the gloom I perceiv'd him come over the lawn,
And, arm in arm with him, a Shepherdess frail—
Who may this be? thought I—when a glimpse of the dawn
Betray'd her—'Twas MARY, the pride of the vale.

Unprepar'd for such friends, at that hour of the day,
I stood mute, like a statue, while past me they flew;
And all too intent on their journey were they,
To wish me good morrow, or bid me adieu.

They vanish'd—and after them, fleet as the wind,
Follow'd MUNGO, to peep at the fugitive pair—
Ye know him, a mortal for mischief design'd;
The scorn of the men, and the scourge of the fair.

Returning at noon, to delight his compeers,
And raise a loud laugh in the village, he strove:—
But nature prevail'd—and the story drew tears,
Though told by a foe to compassion and love.

I heard him—He told how he lurk'd on their way,
In a style of his own, that was flippant and vain—
And to you, my sweet damsels! suffice it to say,
That the lovers mov'd on, till they quitted the plain.

When, breathless and faint, and with sorrow oppress,
'Dear COLIN! is this the compassion you show?
'Stop a moment!" she cried—"On this hill let me rest,
"And take a last look of the valley below."

COLIN stopp'd at her call—and the fresh springing gale,
As she turn'd, on the cheek of the Shepherdess blew;
The sun just arising illumin'd the vale,
And the lodge of her father lay full in her view.

At the sight, ye may judge what emotions arose;
She swore to return—at her COLIN she rail'd:
But their way they resumed—and I need not disclose
By what arts, and what reasons, the Soldier prevail'd.

Since that hour, that sad hour, in the depths of the grove,
Remote from the village, her fate I deplore;
I shut my fond heart to th' approaches of love,
And in woman I dream of perfection no more.

TO

THE GRACES;

ON READING LORD CHESTERFIELD'S LETTERS.

HANDMAIDS of Beauty! Ye who move
In airy measures round her throne,
And scatter, on the paths of Love,
Idalian roses, newly blown:
To you, ye gentle GRACES! say,
What homage shall a Briton pay?—
No Lydian notes we Britons know—
I search o'er all the plain
For flow'rs to strew your fane;
Few are the native flow'rs our climes bestow.

The sons of Greece, whose taste divine
Felt and ador'd whate'er was fair;
High in their temples rear'd your shrine,
And thither bade your steps repair.
Ye heard their vows—that happy hour,
The soft'ning marble felt your pow'r;
The canvass glow'd with living fire;
The lover saw you glance
Along the mazy dance,
And more than mortal music swell'd the choir.

With wreaths, from hills where laurels grow,
Ye crown'd the MUSE, immortal maid!
Or in the myrtle bow'r below,
Round CYTHEREA fondly play'd—
And while your dextrous fingers strove
To deck her in the garb of love,
From each light touch, a charm ensu'd;

Ye plac'd her magic zone—
In all her charms she shone,
And, conscious of her worth, the world subdu'd.

All learn'd to love—Your empire spread
O'er classic shores, and classic isles—
The fierce, the sordid passions fled,
And sacred VIRTUE wore your smiles—
Till then, afar, in rustic cell,
Coy and severe, she lov'd to dwell—
To PLATO's grove ye led the dame—
She less reluctant grew—
Your hands her veil withdrew,
And heroes, patriots, sages, caught the flame.

They breathe no more—On parting wing
Ye saw the stars of GREECE expire.—
Teach me, ye Pow'rs! to shift the string,

And touch the sorrows of the lyre;
For now, amid her mould'ring urns,
GREECE, in maternal anguish, mourns
The wrecks of that ill-fated day;
When her affrighted land
Beheld a barb'rous band
Who ne'er enjoyed your smiles, nor felt your sway.

And now, while o'er your ancient home
The Despot's bloody falchion waves;
In alter'd guise I see you roam
Through lands that swarm with polish'd slaves.
In soft AUSONIA'S tuneful bow'rs,
Or where the SEINE her tribute pours,
In Fashions borrow'd gems, ye glare—
And this, your courtly toil;
To catch the Monarch's smile,
And fix the suffrage of the wav'ring Fair.

STANHOPE, who strove to form the Great,
And mould anew our stubborn swains,
Woo'd you to fix your lasting seat
In the blest isle where Freedom reigns;
Come! then, in Freedom's incense share—
Come, gentle Sisters!—but prepare
To serve in Virtue's cause once more:
Abjure the Siren's art;
To truth your aid impart;
Or turn ye from this heav'n-protected shore.

TO

MR. D.....

No more the clouds of winter lower—
At spring's returning ray
They melt, and in the glist'ning shower
The tempest dies away.
From the green turf impregn'd with dew
The new-born flow'rets start to view;
Fresh fragrance meets us in the plain—
The peopled woods around
Wild melody resound,
And life, and love, and joy resume their reign.

O thou! in pictur'd mantle drest,
The harbinger of joy;
Whose promise calms the troubled breast,
When present ills annoy;
To where my D ..... droops with care,
In this soft hour, sweet Hope! repair,
And paint the future prospect gay—
Wave but thy magic wand,
And Sorrow's twilight band
Flits at the sudden gleam of orient day.

Tell him—But ah! sweet Hope! no more
He heeds thy pleasing strain—
Credulity's fond days are o'er,
And Reason holds the rein;
On thee she turns an eye severe;
Bids thee thy blandishments forbear—
"Cease, cease," she cries, "thy syren tale;

"Hence with thy treach'rous smiles,
"Thy meretricious wiles—
"Hence! hence! and Youth's unguarded breast assail."

O! then let Friendship's sacred pow'r
Her soothing voice essay;
Her chaplet bears no baneful flow'r,
No guile her smiles betray—
In her full eye, methinks, I view
The gentle EMMA's tender blue—
Where soft congenial sorrows flow,
She takes her anxious stand,
Pours all her balsams bland,
And, when she cannot heal, she shares the woe.

Yet why should fiction deck the lay
That strives to touch the heart?—
With Fancy's childish dreams away
Ye airy forms! depart—

Thy friend, my D .....! who has borne
The wildest freaks of Fortune's scorn,
Bids thee thy native force display,
Thy gloomy fears forego:
Though adverse breezes blow,
Still, still, the vig'rous pinion wins its way.

TO

SYMPATHY.

BLEST angel! from the Godhead's shrine,
Still wing'd on purposes benign,
To cherish love's eternal ties,
And breathe the spirit of the skies:
Through Nature's works, thy strong control
Pervades, unites, and binds the whole;
The boist'rous elements agree—
And all the ravish'd eye can trace
Of order, symmetry, and grace,
Mysterious SYMPATHY! results from thee.

Nor less the task to thee assign'd,
To touch, and harmonize the mind:—
A time there was, the sages say,
When Reason's spark inactive lay;
When man, a wretched recreant born,
Lurk'd in the pathless woods forlorn;
To grov'ling appetites a slave:—
If such in his primeval hour;
It was thy charm, auspicious Pow'r!
That drew the shrudd'ring savage from his cave.

Impell'd by thee, with eager pace,
He hied him to his kindred race—
In awkward guise, he first express'd
The new-born transport of his breast:—
At length the stream of language flow'd—
With smiles his op'ning visage glow'd—
A soft intelligence began—

Th' assembling tribe their station chose,
Love's infant colony arose,
And plenty, joy, and freedom dwelt with man.

In plenty blest, the village train
Met jocund on the neighb'ring plain;
Rough was their pastime, wild the roar,
But soon the pastime pleas'd no more—
No more the plain with clamour rung—
On Wisdom's lip thy magic hung—
Through the fond ear persuasion stole,
And the Muse, melting o'er her lyre,
Pursu'd thy mood on ev'ry wire,
And hit the happy notes that reach'd the soul.

'Twas silent joy, 'twas soft surprise—
Till the loud trumpet rent the skies,
And danger's threat'ning hour display'd

The worth that ripen'd in the shade;
For, while the fierce alarum blew,
To arms the hardy natives flew—
Onward in steady march they came,
Resistless, that decisive day,
When link'd by thee, their firm array
Crush'd the proud tyrant in the field of fame.

But far, far distant from the roar
Redoubling on the crowded shore,
Deep in the windings of the vale,
Brush'd only by the whisp'ring gale;
Amid the pure consenting choir
Thy sacred energies inspire
Whate'er of heav'nly bliss we know;
For thine is faith's unclouded beam,
Thine is the saint's ecstatic dream,
And thine, all thine, the good man's friendly glow.

O! deign to come, celestial Pow'r!
An inmate to thy suppliant's bow'r—
And ne'er may cold corroding care
The flavour of thy fruits impair—
But while, through life, the selfish stray,
Lonesome and joyless on their way;
To those I love for ever dear,
Th' uncertain hours may I beguile,
Still cherish'd by thy cordial smile,
Or sooth'd, in sorrow, by thy balmy tear.

TO

.....

THOUGH many a tedious year has roll'd away,
Since last we parted on a foreign shore,
My fancy still beholds thee, young and gay,
Warm, gen'rous, and ingenuous, as before.

Yet where, with retrospective eye, we range,
Alas! full many a doleful change we see:
Say, with thy wonted candour, say what change
Has wonder-working time produc'd in thee?

Do added years a cold reserve bestow,
Thy spirit's sprightly measures to control
Does added wisdom cloud thy open brow,
Or added wealth contract thy lib'ral soul?

O! wouldst thou, as in youth, to latest age,
Thy worth, and best attractive charm, retain?
While solemn mummers fill the busy stage,
Just to thyself, my friend! thyself remain.

For why should Art's fantastic tints be laid
On those fine features they can ne'er improve?
And why should mean disguise presume to shade
The fair defects that best conciliate love?

'Twas not in sly Discretion's narrow school
Thy manners caught the happier art to please;
A foe to every dull punctilious rule,
Thy law was nature, and thy charm was ease.

Far o'er the bounds by formal fools devis'd,
With a bold negligence thy spirit flew:—
The world thy faults forgave, thy virtues priz'd,
And smil'd indulgent ere thy riches grew.

In early life, charm'd with thy frolic feats,
From watchful eyes and grave advice I stole—
Happy we met in joy's obscure retreats,
And seal'd our friendship o'er the flowing bowl.

That sacred rite, my friend! we ne'er belied—
In deeds of amity, for years, we strove;
Sworn brothers, in the field of danger tried,
And gen'rous rivals in CORINNA's love.

Heedless of all that fortune's smiles could bring,
Our unambitious wishes we possest;
How rich! if riches from enjoyment spring—
How wise! if wisdom teach us to be blest.

TO

A FOUNTAIN.

SEQUESTER'D Fountain! ever pure,
Whose placid streamlet flows,
In silent lapse, through glens obscure,
Where timid flocks repose:
Tired and disabled in the race,
I quit ambition's fruitless chace,
To shape my course by thine;
And, pleas'd, from serious trifles turn,
As thus, around thy little urn,
A votive wreath I twine.

Fair Fountain! on thy margin green,
May tufted trees arise,
And spreading boughs thy bosom skreen
From summer's fervent skies;—
Here may the spring her flow'rets strew,
And morning shed her pearly dew,
May health infuse her balm;
And some soft virtue in thee flow,
To mitigate the pangs of woe,
And bid the heart be calm.

O! may thy salutary streams,
Like those of LETHE's spring,
That bathe the silent land of dreams,
Some drops oblivious bring—
With that blest opiate in my bowl,
Far shall I from my wounded soul
The thorns of spleen remove—

Forget how there at first they grew,
And, once again, with man renew
The cordial ties of love.

For what avails the wretch to bear
Imprinted on his mind,
The lessons of distrust and fear,
Injurious to mankind?—
Hopeless in his disastrous hour,
He sees the gath'ring tempest lower,
The bursting cloud impend—
Tow'rds the wild waste he turns his eye,
Nor can that happy port descry,
The bosom of a friend.

How chang'd since that propitious time,
When woo'd by fortune's gale,
Fearless in youth's advent'rous prime,

He crowded ev'ry sail! —
The swelling tide, the sportive breeze,
Lightly along the halcyon seas
His bounding pinnace bore —
In search of happiness, the while,
He steer'd by ev'ry fragrant isle,
And touch'd at ev'ry shore.

Ah me! to Youth's ingenuous eye
What charms the prospect wears! —
Bright as the portals of the sky
The op'ning world appears;
There every figure stands confest,
In all the sweet advantage drest
Of Candour's radiant robe —
There no mean cares admission find,
Love is the business of mankind,
And Honour rules the globe.

But if those gleams fallacious prove
That paint the world so fair;
If heav'n has plac'd for gen'rous love
No soft asylum there;
If men fair faith, fair fame deride,
Bent on the crooked paths that guide
To int'rest's sordid shrine;
Be yours, ye gloomy sons of Woe!
That melancholy truth to know,
The dream of bliss be mine.

THE

VISIONARY.

FANCY! thou changeful maid,
Now in dark weeds array'd,
And now in all the hues of orient light;
While Reason slumb'ring lay,
Ere yet the golden ray
Of Science pierc'd the gloom of gothic night,
Hell's inauspicious meteors round thee blaz'd,
And pallid Fear crouch'd low, and shudder'd as he gaz'

Th' uncultivated shore
No lively scen'ry wore —
No voice from festive hamlet cheer'd the plain —
Smote by thy with'ring pow'r,
At midnight's murky hour,
The pilgrim call'd his drowsy saints in vain;
Nearer and nearer still the spectre drew,
And in the sullen blast the mutt'ring demon flew.

But lo! the night is o'er —
The demon roams no more —
Resume thy smiles, and meet me on the lawn;
To wake the forms of joy
Thy milder spells employ,
And to my classic rites, at op'ning dawn,
Bring the sweet sylvan pow'rs whose haunts I love,
The Naiad of the stream, and Dryad of the grove.

Or if in distant bow'r,
Till ev'ning shadows low'r,
The nightingale's full notes prolong my stay;
Thy sportive tricks pursue,
And bid the dapper crew
On my returning path innoxious play—
While elfin lamps in every thicket shine,
And the long lane resounds with minstrelsy divine.

With Fancy's dreams, in vain,
Would I beguile my pain—
At eve I tread her soothing walks no more—
But in the dreary isle
Of this dismantled pile,
With frantic search, the hallow'd round explore;
Since the sad hour that snatch'd a blooming maid
From love's delighted eye, to death's impervious shade

O'er her untimely grave,
Where weeds and thistles wave,
Where ruin gathers from the mould'ring wall:
While memory prompts my tear,
Does CLARA hover near?—
Does the surviving spirit hear me call?—
Or rests she in the cold oblivious deep,
To cheerless gloom consign'd, and everlasting sleep?

Before my dazzled eyes
What strange illusions rise?—
'Tis she! 'tis she! that form divinely fair—
That messenger of love
Who beckons from above—
Th' angelic vision mounts, and melts in air,
By choral voices welcom'd on her way,
Through yon bright track that streams unsufferable day.

THE

EVENING WALK.

O THOU! to pity's kind affections true,
Of VARRO thou hast heard, the good, the wise!
Onward, my EMMA—and the spot we view
Where his forsaken seat in ruin lies.

How dead the path! across the bord'ring woods,
On brushing wing, no active breezes play;
O'er the dank soil the heavy vapour broods,
And nature's wild luxuriance choaks the way.

By well-known scenes that sooth'd my youthful mind,
Through fields that in the pride of culture shone,
Sorrowing, I pass; and in my progress find
The fence demolish'd, and the vista flown.

But lo! the solitary castle nigh,
Whose halls nor inmate hold, nor guest invite;
Save yon ill-omen'd birds that perch on high,
Or round the turrets wheel their clam'rous flight.

The parting roof that loads these mould'ring walls,
Scarce yields a shelter from the drizzling show'r;
In at the shatter'd pane the ivy crawls,
And through the waste apartment weaves her bow'r.

Where peace, where pleasure dwelt, destruction prowls;
Where mirth was heard, and music wont to chime—
Hark! how with sudden gust the tempest howls,
And flaps the jarring doors, unlock'd by time.

How chang'd th' abode where VARRO lov'd to rest!
When, by his happier stars, from courts remov'd,
He liv'd, of fortune, kindred, friends, possest,
By men applauded, and by heav'n approv'd.

Blest in himself, his bounty's warm embrace
Diffus'd the blessing o'er his wide domain;
For one was he of that primeval race
Whose splendour shone propitious on the plain.

The hopes that cherish age were all his own;
The happy sire his gen'rous sons survey'd,
Who, to the blooming verge of manhood grown,
His worth reflected, and his love repaid.

Fall'n with the parent tree, in dust they lie—
This mutilated mansion why explore?
Where Fancy rivets her distemper'd eye
On joys for ever past, and friends no more!

As through the storms of life our course we steer,
Still some lost comfort down the current goes —
Turn, EMMA, turn! suppress the fruitless tear,
And reap the present good that Heav'n bestows.

HOME.

To .....

The Bandit whom the laws pursue,
The Soldier, and the Gypsey crew,
Arabs, and Tartars, ever doom'd to roam—
Whate'er their place of shelter be,
A tent, a cave, or hollow tree,
Thither they hie with joy, and call it HOME.

There if a doxy, or a wife,
Receive the wretch escap'd from strife;
If there his tatter'd brood around him cling—
His features catch a bright'ning smile,
He rests him from his sordid toil,
And in his narrow confines reigns a king.

While thus the poor and wretched find
Th' asylum for a wounded mind—
Distemper'd men there are, estrang'd from home,
Cold to an angel's kind embrace,
Cheerless amid a blooming race,
And dead to comfort in a princely dome.

Men in the lap of Fortune nurst,
With all her froward humours curst,
And teas'd by wishes ever on the wing;
Who, wand'ring still through Folly's maze,
In search of bliss consume their days,
Nor taste her genuine draught at Nature's spring.

Yet such the men who lead the gay,
The pride and patterns of the day,
Whose high-priz'd friendship fools and strangers boast—
Blush, thou! to court their barren fame;
Let HOME, sweet HOME, thy presence claim,
And those enjoy thy smiles who love thee most.

TO

THE PARSON OF .....

While courtly bards present their venal lays
Where fortune smiles and wealth unlocks her store,
My saunt'ring Muse along the hamlet strays,
And sings, unpension'd, at the good man's door.

But chief this quiet spot attracts her care,
Where dwells a priest from pride and priestcraft free;
Too well his mansion's mould'ring walls declare,
That not of Levi's pamper'd sons is he.

Poor as the chosen children of the dust,
Who o'er the world with heaven's glad tidings ran,
Meekly he bears his delegated trust,
The minister of God, the friend of Man.

But what avail him here his pious toil,
And the mild spirit that his zeal displays?
On earth he labours in a barren soil,
And man with cold neglect his love repays.

Oft has th' enlighten'd saint essay'd in vain
To win my steps from error's dreary way;
Still, still I scoff'd at Reason's formal strain,
And turn'd me from her cold, penurious ray.

But now, for suff'ring virtue taught to sigh,
I start indignant from the sceptic's dream;
And, as I cast an anxious look on high,
The morning star of hope begins to beam.

The day-light springs—no more my doubts remain;
For hark! some cherub whispers through the grove—
" When this short span is o'er, the just shall reign,
" And kindred spirits meet in lands of love."

THE

INVITATION.

THOU! who beyond my humble fold
Pursu'st thy rapid way,
Far through the western pines behold
The setting orb of day.
Be warn'd—avoid the coming night,
Nor by the crescent's dubious light
This dang'rous path explore;

For woods and rocks obstruct the dale,
And hark! in ev'ry swelling gale,
The mountain torrents roar.

Bright with the blush of ev'ning skies,
Where yonder window glows,
A small, but friendly cot there lies,
The seat of calm repose;
A roof that cheers my simple heart
More than the gorgeous domes of art
That with false splendour shine—
Let not the sons of Pride reprove,
Or wonder at my partial love,
I call the cottage mine.

If, in the lap of Fortune bred,
Thou view'st with scornful eyes

Th' inglorious lot and lowly shed
That I have learnt to prize;
To-night, within my peaceful door,
On Nature's sweet salubrious store
Thy sickly taste regale;
And from the banquet thou shalt know,
How pure the streams of pleasure flow
Through life's sequester'd vale.

TO

THE SPLENETIC.

OFTIMES, my friend! I hear thee say—
" This gloomy district once was gay;
" This land the fruits of friendship bore,
" And welcome sat at ev'ry door;
" Each morn the happy neighbours met,
" And nightly parted with regret;

" But times are changed—and blooming mirth,
" Friendship, and love, and all the pow'rs
" That mingled in our social hours,
" Are vanish'd from the earth."

While thus the child of spleen repines,
The sun in all his glory shines;
Peep from thy dungeon, and admire—
Lo! in their holiday attire,
The young, the beautiful, and gay,
In pairs along the meadow stray—
Why sit we here like churlish elves?
Cease, cease, my friend! thy peevish strain:
Things in their pristine course remain;
The change is in ourselves.

But, heedless of our own decay,
On fancied ills the blame we lay;
Like old ACASTO, who complains
That now eternal winter reigns—
" Some years ago," ACASTO cries,
" How cloudless were our summer skies!
" Each morn we could our sports pursue—
" And, oft as ev'ning drew her veil,
" I stroll'd with LUCY down the dale,
" Nor felt the chilly dew."

THE

PASTIME.

BENEATH thy banners, Queen of Love,
Behold thy hoary vet'ran move,
Unwilling to retire;
His wrinkles with thy myrtles hide,
Nor let thy youthful bands deride
His ineffectual fire.

With nerves unbrac'd and limbs decay'd,
Which no warm antidote can aid,
No magic can restore;
Still thy fond suppliant I incline,
And kiss with fervent lips the shrine,
Whose treasures I adore.

What though no more with tow'ring flames,
And youthful warmth, I urge the dames
Who grace thy blooming train?
Still some faint embers upwards move,
That fire with visionary love
The regions of the brain.

Nor ye, the serious and the wise,
Demurely blame me, while I prize
The service of the fair;
For who can deem my labour vain,
If with complacent smiles they deign
To crown my tender care?

There rests my unambitious aim—
All frantic hopes, all further claim,
For ever I abjure;
Th' ungen'rous dotard I detest,
Who strives to wound the gentle breast,
Without the balm to cure.

With DELIA as I pass the day,
Soft, inoffensive things I say,
That sooth her vacant heart;
I touch the strings to love assign'd,
And gently form her op'ning mind,
To play the woman's part.

How love conducts his subtle snare,
And forms th' approach that wins the fair,
My practis'd lips explain;
And all the finer arts unfold,
By which her sex repels the bold,
Or fires the tim'rous swain,

Meanwhile with fond, officious care,
I smooth her robe, compose her hair,
By wanton winds carest;
And still assiduous in my trust,
With trembling hands I oft adjust
The nosegay in her breast.

As thus my charming task I ply,
I scorn the world's invidious eye,
And boast my careless ease;
Nor small the boast in life's decay,
That thus, with Fancy's youthful play,
I can be pleas'd and please.

ELEGY

ON THE DEATH OF A YOUNG BULLFINCH.

By Mr. D.....

FAREWELL, sweet bird! and art thou dead?
And has thy little spirit fled?—
O, loss! beyond repair!
Could nought avail? the tears of FAN?
Thy soft caresses, gentle ANN?
Nor ev'n my anxious pray'r?

O! hadst thou, beauteous fool, divin'd
For what fair lot thou wast design'd,
What future bliss was near—
Thou hadst not then resign'd thy breath;
That thought had pow'r to vanquish death;
Thy heav'n, sweet bird! was here.

Thee gentle ANN had call'd her own;
Her alabaster hand thy throne,
Her breast had been thy nest;
And sure a mistress so divine,
So tender and so fair as thine,
No bullfinch e'er possess'd.

But peace be with thy gentle shade!
Thy grave no plough shall e'er invade;
And each revolving year,
In silent grief, shall ANN and I,
While plantive turtles murmur nigh,
Bedew thee with a tear.

TO THE

AUTHOR OF THE FOREGOING ELEGY,

UPON HIS PUBLICATION OF A LAW BOOK.

WHILE deeply, in your serious page,
The learned and the wise engage—
I still pursue the way
That leads to Fancy's flow'ry seat,
And listen, as at U - - 's feet
You pour the glowing lay.

And oft I visit ANNA's bow'r,
Where fairy bells, at midnight hour,
Struck sullen sounds of death;
What time the tyrant of the tomb
Remorseless smote the painted plume,
And stopp'd the tuneful breath.

While ANNA for her bird complains,
While the lov'd songster's cold remains
Thy pious hands enshrine;
In sable vestments I appear,
And fondly mingle many a tear
With ANNA's tears and thine.

And, lo! by thy sweet numbers led,
Th' obsequious turtles, o'er the dead,
Their bidden task fulfil;
But mark how they express their pain —
Though sad, yet soothing is their strain —
They murmur, and they bill.

Then why thy fruitless tears employ? —
With some ingenious change of toy
The fair one's grief assuage;
Arise, and search the thickets round,
Some curious bird may still be found
For gentle ANNA's cage.

TO

THE VINE.

WRITTEN IN FRANCE.

ENCHANTRESS! to whose juice benign
Heav'ns golden dreams we owe;
Blest be the soil, ambrosial VINE!
In which thou deign'st to grow—
And blest the tall supporting tree,
The bridegroom elm, that, clasp'd by thee,
Bears the gay trophies of thy love—
Fruits, pendent in the gilding ray,
And floating foliage, round his spray,
In many a garland wove!

O! may the natives of the land
The smiles of comfort share;
The swains, who, with laborious hand,
Thy liquid bliss prepare;
The med'cine, on my natal shore,
Amid the winter's dreary roar,
That renovates the drooping soul—
Charms the heart's frozen mood away,
And bids the gleams of fancy play
Beneath the gloomy pole!

Now happy in a milder sky,
From chymic arts secure,
Fast by the fountain head we lie,
And quaff the vintage pure—
Fraught with fresh sweets the nectar flows,
Nor needs what mellowing age bestows—
See where the ready goblets shine!
And mark, ye sons of taste! how bright,

How soft the fluid's purple light!
Its flavour how divine!

'This precious store from vulgar view
My jealous walls shall hide;
And never shall its balm bedew
The sullen lip of Pride—
But ye, my friends! whose manners join
In sympathetic warmth with mine,
For nobler, deeper draughts prepare—
Let shouts of just applause resound,
For lo! my votive glass is crown'd
In honour of the fair.

Without a pilot, on the main,
Though now we bear away,
The port of reason we'll regain
By morn's returning ray—
But O! ye festive pow'rs! to-night,
Prolong, exalt the keen delight,

Banish far hence the grave, the coy;
And ev'ry glowing guest provide
With a fair HEBE by his side,
To pledge the cup of joy.

THE

HUMDRUM COMPANION.

Oft as the day's dull labours end,
With gentle habit for my guide,
To T - - - - - -'s quiet haunt I bend,
And place me by his ample side.—
Can this th' effect of philters be?—
Ah no! his sober smile
Acquits his heart of guile—
Nor skill'd, I ween, in magic lore is he.

'Twas not the god of wine, nor wit,
With gay convivial garlands crown'd,
Who first our bond of union knit;
For T - - - - - holds this doctrine sound—
That floods of wine engender strife;
And wicked wit, we know,
With empty noise and show,
Mars all the serious purposes of life.

It is not friendship's tender theme
That thus protracts our scanty bowls;
For little does the good man dream
Of the strange unison of souls.
Yet such my fond partiality—
I shun the pert and vain,
And with this simple swain
I taste the joys of sweet equality.

THE

FAREWELL.

To J. G.

HE needy youth, compell'd to roam,
hen first he quits his native home,
ves rising sorrow to the wind—
e leaves no precious pledge behind—
hy like a dastard should he grieve?
o load hangs heavy at his heart,
is well-brac'd sinews play their part,
What may not he achieve?

From care and anxious foresight free,
In the first bark he trusts the sea—
'Tis well if prosp'rous breezes play—
Should fate arrest her on her way,
No partner in the freight she bore;
Amid the wreck a plank he gains,
And while the hurricano reigns,
I see him make the shore.

Whence, then, this foolish, fond delay?
Does sloth, or love, prolong thy stay?
The destin'd vessel rides in view—
Go, face the hardships of the crew,
Nor at thy scanty stores repine;
Who knows what time may yet unfold?
Or who are doom'd to share the gold
That ripens in the mine?

Fortune, I know, is blind and coy—
Do thou the honest means employ;
Should she thy toils at length repay,
Then let the soft affections sway—
Return, from vice and folly free;
And DELIA, with unfaded charms,
DELIA, my boy, shall bless thy arms,
Or one as fair as she.

THE

SAUNTERER.

FULL of the dream of keen delight,
In youth a thousand toils we prove,
We climb ambition's fearful height,
And seek, thro' midnight gloom, the bow'r of lo
But with th' ensuing morn
The proffer'd bliss we scorn,
And throbs of new desire our rest annoy;
Distemper fires the veins,
The fev'rish thirst remains,
And passion's bitter dregs pollute the cup of joy.

Then happier far, in life's decay,
If neither gout nor stone assail,
If conscience, at the close of day,
With angel visitation bid us hail;
When frantic hopes are past,
We taste repose at last,
And reap sincere delight from homely cheer;
For, by the mossy cell,
Where quiet loves to dwell,
The streams of comfort rise, and run for ever clear.

Assembled round the social hearth,
When winter holds his rigid sway,
We share the fruits of temp'rate mirth,
Nor fail to charm the dreary hours away—
And O! the joy that streams
Amid the coming gleams,
When blossoms ope, and birds are on the wing;
What time by music led,

The garden path I tread,
And meet the balmy breath of renovating spring.

But not to formal walks confin'd,
While yet the jocund seasons reign,
I leave the garden wall behind,
With all the green enclosures of the plain:
And sights, and sounds of joy,
My wand'ring steps decoy
Still farther on, in quest of something new;
Till, past the bushy rill,
I mount yon shelving hill,
Where distant spires are kenn'd, and ocean rolls in view

There, as on Rapture's dazzled eye
The wonders of creation throng,
Devotion wakes, and wafts a sigh
To tracts beyond the limits of my song;
Till, forc'd by growing heat,

I quit the lofty seat,
And hide me from the sun's meridian glare,
Down in some elfin nook,
Beside the pebbly brook,
Whose sound incessant brings forgetfulness of care.

Let sullen fools for ever hide—
At ev'n I gain the peopled road;
Or, led by friendship, turn aside,
To greet my neighbour in his thatch'd abode.
With him I pace the fields,
Learn what his harvest yields,
And see his children pass in playful drove;
I know the urchins all—
On me by name they call,
And flatter wrinkled age with many a mark of love.

As thus my daily rounds I go,
Still some kind office breeds delay—

My mite with pleasure I bestow,
To cheer the wand'ring beggar on his way:
And should the buxom lass,
Of yonder hamlet pass,
Fresh, blooming, and of harmless favours free;
Safe from her roguish smile,
I hand her o'er the stile,
And pray that she may meet with livelier lads than me

RELIGION.

RELIGION! heav'nly maid!
Who lends't thy willing aid,
To bear the Pilgrim on his thorny way;
Whose light, athwart the gloom,
That saddens o'er the tomb,
Gives the sweet promise of a future day,
In vain the savage foes of man conspire,
To shake thy stable throne, and quench thy hallow'd fire.

For tho' on summer seas
Th' adventurer courts the breese,
Nor heeds thy warning voice while sirens sing;
In life's declining hour,
When clouds begin to low'r,
And hopes fallacious vanish on the wing;
What guidance shall he trust but thine alone,
Appall'd by coming night, and on a coast unknown?

When reft of ev'ry stay,
He sees them swept away,
Whom love and friendship in his fortunes join'd;
What time with streaming eyes,
He mourns the sever'd ties,
That ardent youth first fasten'd on the mind;
To whose kind counsel shall the wretch attend,
But thine that ever breathes the fervour of a friend?

Let philosophic pride
Our fears and woes deride,
And arm the callous breast in stubborn steel;
Thy lips a wisdom teach
Beyond the stoic's reach—
Thy votaries learn to triumph while they feel—
With sober joy receive the boons hat flow,
ıd bless the chast'ning hand that deals th'afflictive blow.

O maid! for ever mild,
Sweet Mercy's darling child!
May those who plead thy cause, thy spirit share;
For in the hermit's cell,
Should hate or envy dwell,
Should pride, or blind presumption enter there,
What boots the suppliant v.ice, the bended knee?
e follows faithless guides, and wanders far from thee.

REFLECTIONS

BY

A FATHER.

THO' sweet the breath of vernal hours,
When garlands hang on ev'ry thorn,
When ev'ry path is strew'd with flow'rs,
And opening rose-buds greet the morn;
Who knows what blasts may yet arise;—
However sweet, however gay,
The blossom may our hopes betray—
It is th' autumnal fruit, we prize.

Alas! the same precarious fate
Attends on childhood's pleasing show—
The parent views with hopes elate,
His favourites round the table grow;
Who lost to worth in riper years,
To duty lost may yet conspire,
To wring thy heart, unhappy sire!
And drench thy furrow'd cheek in tears.

While the poor child of homelier mien,
Who in the corner sits forlorn,
Sobs hourly at parental spleen,
And eats the bitter bread of scorn;
Untainted by the pamper'd crew,
And faithful to affection's call,
Perhaps, in his paternal hall,
Shall trim the lamp of joy anew.

But youth and manhood fairly past,
There still awaits a trying stage:
The latent vice may spring at last,
Baneful and rank in frozen age;
When he, who honour's semblance wore,
Forgetful of his better days,
Stoops from his pride as life decays,
And pants for virtuous fame no more.

Perhaps the sordid love of gold
Contaminates the dotard's mind:
Perhaps to friends and kindred cold,
Unjust, suspicions, and unkind,
He feeds a viper near his heart:
And sneaks unpitied to the grave;
The dupe of some obsequious knave,
Or wheedl'd by a strumpet's art.

O ! may the star, beneath whose pow'r
I rose and ripen'd into man,
And scap'd in life's unguarded hour,
When on the verge of guilt I ran ;
Kind, and propitious as before,
Prolong its heav'n-illumin'd ray
To guide me through the close of day,
And land me on a safer shore !

THE BIRD.

The little bird who ceas'd to sing
And sat forlorn with drooping wing,
While winter's angry tempests blew;
On renovated plumes elate,
At spring's approach selects his mate,
And pours his native notes anew.
A sweet recess to love he builds,
Enjoys whate'er the summer yields,
Nor dreams that winter shall again ensue.

How happy in his narrow span!
How blest beyond the lot of man!
Who brooding ever on the past;
Who gall'd, through life, in thorny ways,
And sadden'd by disastrous days
Despondent shudders in the blast—
And should a gleam of joy appear,
Possest of all to fancy dear,
He still foresees, it will not, will not last.

But why the laws of Heav'n arraign?
Why of the lot of man complain?
His sov'reign balm is ever near—
And while the tenants of the grove,
By winter's rage abridg'd of love,
Are lost to all their wonted cheer,
Man still can grasp his lovely prize,
Brave and surmount the changeful skies,
And gather fruits of love through all the year.

What then avails the feather'd throng,
Their fleeting bliss, their vernal song,
Their tie that can no blast abide!
Who scar'd at famine's threat'ning day,
Disperse, and wing their separate way,
A partial *pittance* to provide —
Ah! how unlike the human pair!
Who, blind to *ev'ry selfish care*,
Endure the suff'ring season side by side.

TO A LADY

WHO PASSED SOME TIME IN A RETIRED PART OF THE COUNTRY, WHERE THE AUTHOR THEN RESIDED.

WHEN first thou cam'st in beauty's pride,
With playful fancy for thy guide,
To reap the homage of our plain;
Allur'd by thy bewitching smile,
We simple swains forsook our toil,
And follow'd in thy train.

Thy lovely form, thy winning air,
Thy manners gay and debonnair
Surpris'd the natives of the shore:
Nor could the young thy pow'r withstand,
When hoary heads, at thy command,
The cap of folly wore.

In honour of thy matchless mien,
We hail'd thee as our rural queen—
Join'd by the suffrage of the fair;
Who, flocking from the neighbouring bow'rs,
Prepar'd a diadem of flow'rs,
To bind thy floating hair.

With thee the soul of pleasure reign'd—
No sigh was heard, no voice complain'd,
No sad, nor sullen looks were seen—
All in their merry functions strove—
'Twas endless piping in the grove,
Or dancing on the green.

But born to please in ev'ry mood,
Amid the labyrinth of the wood,
Attended by a chosen few;
Oft would'st thou play a pensive part,
And speak the language of a heart,
To gentlest feelings true.

Oft would'st thou as by Heaven inspir'd,
And of terrestrial follies tir'd,
Pause at each step, and moralize —
Thy wisdom our attention rais'd —
We fondly listen'd, fondly gaz'd
Judge thou ! if we were wise.

Meanwhile, through paths bestrew'd with flow'rs,
Unmindful of the fleeting hours,
With thee we stray'd, till close of day —
From scenes so secret and so sweet,
It was not easy to retreat —
It was unsafe to stay.

One evening, in the beachen shade,
Thy faithless lips a promise made,
To bide with us, and roam no more —
A chilly wind ere morning blue —
Away the bird of passage flew,
And sought another shore.

Long lost to us, in courts afar,
Thou gaily shin'st a leading star —
The joys of courts let others tell —
In lowly glens from envy free,
We live, and when we think of thee,
We sigh, and wish thee well.

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

OF THE

LAKE OF KILLARNEY.

YE damsels! who with cautious care
Avoid the broad meridian glare,
To please the prudent folks whom none can please;
While spies no more their station keep,
While busy tongues are tied by sleep,
And all is hush'd in silence, but the breeze
That whispers o'er the moon-illumin'd lake;
For once our tender call obey,
Drop the disguise, ye wear by day,
Come forth, and in our harmless sports partake.

Down in the creek a boat attends,
Well trimm'd and mann'd by chosen friends,
Who know to guide the helm, and ply the oar:
Besides we boast a tuneful band,
Prepar'd to sail at your command,
And pour their melody along the shore;
Where sportive echo, at each closing note,
Starts, and replies from fairy ground,
Through all her mazes warbles round,
And breathes a last farewell in woods remote.

Thence tacking, with an easy sail
Our bark shall bear before the gale,
On a short visit to the neighbouring isles —
Fit objects for the painter's eye,
In many a curious group they lie;
Each island in Elysian beauty smiles,
A well set jewel in the wat'ry way,

A little, calm, secluded scene,
With thickets cloath'd, and paths between,
Where friends and lovers might for ever stray.

If we believe the current tales,
Strange is the witchery there prevails,
When troops of lads and lasses make the land;
For tho' they mean to sport and play,
In serious pairs they drop away,
Adown the shady paths on either hand;
Decoy'd and wilder'd long by magic art,
Till waking from illusion sweet,
All in some central glade they meet,
And laugh, and wonder how they came to part.

But fear not ye those idle tales—
The pow'r of incantation fails
At the chaste presence of a wedded dame—
And she, the pattern of the wise,
Whom no sinister arts surprise,

Clelia, with us, embarks her spotless fame—
Join'd by her mate—a well selected pair—
She, to preside with gentle sway,
And lead us in th' unerring way—
And he, the joyous wight to banish care.

By the soft radiance of the moon,
With breathing instruments in tune,
As o'er the glassy lake our course we steer;
While souls in unison combine,
While innocence and freedom join,
And pensive pleasure blends with frolic cheer;
Attentive still to what the world may say,
Clelia, the judge of what is fit,
With calm observant eye shall sit,
And give due warning of th' opproach of day.

THE

ADVICE.

To thee, my fair! when all was new,
And the town open'd on thy view;
No limits could thy rambles bound—
Thy steps tripp'd lightly o'er the ground,
That teems with fanciful delight;
For ever crowded, ever gay,
Where thought obtrudes not on the day,
And folly rings her larum through the night.

But now the novelty is o'er,
Thy frame sustains the toil no more—
Fancy no more to pleasure wakes,
The rose of health thy cheek forsakes—
Peevish, and pensive, art thou grown,
And yet the cause that prompts thy sigh,
Why the tear gathers in thine eye,
Is to thyself, unhappy maid! unknown.

And here, alas! to soothe thy woes,
No plant of healing virtue grows—
No gems of value here abound;
Where trifles, in eternal round,
The mind's degraded pow'rs employ;
For know that, to the female kind,
Heav'n has some serious tasks assign'd,
And 'tis in duty's path ye taste of joy.

Would'st thou thy faded bloom restore,
And be the girl thou wert before?
Hence, to thy native shades repair—
Join in thy mother's household care;
Thy father's smiles, with smiles repay,
And all thy pristine calm retrieve,
Lull'd by the nightingale at eve,
And summon'd by the lark at opening day.

Sweet are the birds that haunt the grove,
And ah! how sweet, the voice of love—
Haste then—the birds already sing;
And 'mid the melody of spring,
Some youth, perhaps, of soul sincere,
Shall bid thee welcome to the vale,
And whisper a persuasive tale,
That blushing innocence may safely hear.

TO

A YOUNG MIDSHIPMAN,

THE AUTHOR'S GRANDSON.

December 1798.

WHILE thy compeers, at school confin'd,
Plod o'er the weary task assign'd,
Or snatch the short-liv'd sweets of play
Enfranchis'd on some holiday;
Thine is, my boy! a manly game,
Doom'd by thy fate, on seas afar,
To wing the thunderbolt of war,
And share thy country's fame.

Though distant from the busy stage,
And marr'd in ev'ry limb by age;
In fancy active, as before,
With thee, dear boy! I quit the shore—
I trace thy course along the main;
And, on the confines of the grave,
Renew my commerce with the brave,
And live in thee again.

In Jervis' gallant navy bred,
On glory's track by Nelson led,
Well may'st thou boast of storms sustain'd,
Of battles fought, and honour gain'd;
A partner in the recent toil,
When war's dread tempest onward bore,
And Europe echo'd with the roar,
That burst upon the Nile.

'Twas then the worth of Briton's shone,
Arriving on a coast unknown;
Plung'd in the gath'ring gloom of night,
All the dire terrors of the fight,
The persevering Briton braves—
Day springs at last—the clouds divide—
And o'er the foes dismantled pride,
The flag of Britain waves.

The winds may blow, the billows roll—
No farther fear alarms my soul—
If thou possess a sailor's heart;
Though rude in ev'ry polish'd art,
If thou a sailor's worth display,
Thy hardy skiff shall stem the seas,
And heav'n afford a happy breeze,
To bear thee on thy way.

TO

FOLLY.

HAIL! goddess of the vacant eye!
To whom my earliest vows were paid—
Whose prattle hush'd my infant cry,
As on thy lap, supinely laid,
I saw thee shake in sportive mood
Thy tinkling bells and antic hood.

Enlisted in the school-boy band,
With thee from learning's porch I fled;
And though the pedant's tyrant hand
Hung threat'ning o'er my flaxen head—

Long were my truant footsteps seen
In thy brisk gambols on the green.

At length, with vast conceits inspir'd,
I bade thee and thy sports adieu—
But when, with expectation fir'd,
I to the world's wide circle flew,
I look'd around, with simple stare,
And found thee in broad features there:

There saw thee, high in regal seat,
Thy crowded, clam'rous orgies hold;
With bounding hands thy cymbals beat,
And full thy tawdry flag unfold—
Proud that thy motley liv'ries shone
On myriads who begirt thy throne.

Again in social league we join'd;
Through fancied fields of bliss we stray'd;

A thousand wonders we design'd,
A thousand idle pranks we play'd
Now grasp'd at glory's quiv'ring ray,
And now in CLOE's chains we lay.

But, FOLLY, why prolong my verse,
To sing the laughter-loving age?
And what avails it to rehearse
Thy triumphs on the youthful stage?
Where Wisdom, if she claims a place,
Sits ever with an awkward grace!

For now, ev'n now, in riper years,
Spite of thy many-colour'd vest,
Oft I renounce my cautious fears,
And clasp thee to my thoughtless breast;
Enough, that in Presumption's mien
Beneath my roof thou ne'er art seen.

That, as my harmless course I run;
With candid eyes the world I view—
And still with gen'rous pity shun
The moody, moping, serious crew;
Since what they fondly, vainly prize,
Is ever, ever to be wise.

THE END.

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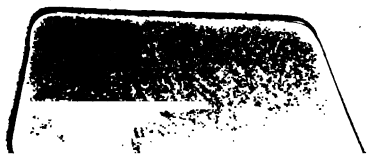
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